

Until You're Mine

by HiddenEye

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Summary: Who knew self control could easily be forgotten when in all her life, Toph was taught obedience and proper etiquette the moment she was born that the thought of something as, scandalous, as she had done could probably render her parents horrified. Tokka.

Until You're Mine

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A/N: I'm going to do a three-shot for this. Hopefully, I'll be able finish this within a month, if I'm lucky in two weeks. Enjoy!

* * *

><p>105 AG**

They were _insane_.

It was obvious they were out of their minds, completely lost it from months and days of worrying they would get killed somewhere along their journey of getting Aang to train for the war, where over the years had passed, that somewhere along the road of hidden fears and brushed off feelings, that it snapped to the pressure of them all, as easily as tying a raging saber-tooth moose lion to a tree with a thread.

Wasted, those years of keeping up a face and having an iron grip on her own emotions that was supposed to be used in front of galas and charities, ran down the drain without a second thought.

Because honestly, if Toph couldn't restrict herself in doing things she's not supposed to do in the first place, how was she going to convince others not to follow her stupid decisions as well?

Of course, that 'others' was actually just him, and if she remembered correctly, he had less self control over himself than she had, since he could be the best definition of a lumbering armadillo-bear if he ever felt like it, abandoning all the so called grace he donned over the years he trained and during those times when all of them fought off those hooligans who still believed that Ozai was their true leader instead of his son. To which, she thought, that the rebels were idiots and they had the very right to be thrown away by her massive boulders she chucked them all at their direction.

Who knew self control could easily be forgotten when in all her life, Toph was taught obedience and proper etiquette the moment she was born that the thought of something as, scandalous, as she had done could probably render her parents horrified.

The irony was that, she had thought of maintaining her self control while doing the exact opposite of her current issue.

It was hopeless, if she couldn't listen to herself to get it through her own stubborn skull that everything about whatever both of them were doing was just plain wrong, then all she could say to anyone who would tried to break them apart was good luck on trying.

That was, if anyone of them found out.

See, the thing about being in a well respected as well as rich family was that not only you have the almost unlimited excess of money and could get away with most of the things that commoners won't have the luxury to do, but they wouldn't expect you to do such tactless decisions. Only because, by carrying the Beifong name above her head and being mostly non-existent to the world as she only stayed indoors -she wanted to snort at that- people would think that the only way for her to express herself was through dainty postures and wispy voices.

But, of course, that wasn't the case.

She could act like it, since she had years of practice when she stayed at home and the only primary concern then was to make sure Lao and Poppy Beifong wouldn't find out about their fragile little girl's daily activities down the Earth Rumble VI, where she would be fighting men thrice her size.

That was years ago and she had made efforts of mending the broken bond she had with them over the years. Especially since, she was the one who caused their relationship to drift apart for a while when she first ran away from home at the age of twelve.

She found out that her father moved back to her mother at Gaoling after a brief family gathering between father and daughter at Yu Dao, and after that she tried to send more messenger hawks during the time she was training her students at her academy, using Penga as her writer and reader once she got their replies. She even visited them at most once in three months, just to reassure them that she wasn't going to disappear from the face of earth forever.

Which then led her to the beginning of the mess she was in a couple of years ago.

* * *

><p>103 AG**

"We want you to come with us to a gala in Ba Sing Se."

The rim of the cup didn't manage to touch her lips when Toph stopped.
"A gala?"

Poppy dabbed her mouth with a piece of fine cloth before setting it down on the table gently, giving Toph a sweet smile that usually got men to fondle with words. "Yes, dear, a gala in the Royal Palace. We had always been invited every year, the ambassadors and other noblemen such as the Pang and Yum Soon Hong families would be expecting our arrival."

"Since you've grown up and had convinced us of perfectly of taking care of your own," her father added as he took a sip of his tea. "Your mother and I decided to bring you to one now, since you never actually had a chance when you were younger, and by the time the war had ended you're busy with your own work by expanding the capabilities of metalbending."

"Besides," Poppy began cheerfully, a smile stretched on her lips. "We want you to meet them all personally, and mingle around with people of your age while we're at it. It would be a great opportunity to meet them all."

Toph couldn't really understand it, but somehow this offer deeply unsettled the sixteen year old, as if there was something off about the way they were so enthusiastic for her to get to know a few more snobbish nobles she rather not stand so near with.

Setting down her porcelain cup on the dinner table, she folded her hands on her lap, more out of habit than ever. "When is this gala?"

"Oh, in another two weeks. The noblemen and their families are very dedicated in meeting you in person later on," Lao informed her. "They've heard such great achievements you've done for the past years ever since you helped the Avatar stop the war, and had insisted on you to come as well."

"Really?" She had to keep herself from answering drily as she kept her face neutral. "I thought you stopped going to galas, Father."

He waved it away. "That was when your mother and I were not on good terms as of yet with each other, since the both of us were still mourning over your, ah, escape," Toph winced slightly at his choice of word, since that was what she pretty much did four years ago. "But all has passed and now we would want you to come with us to the gala, like a family get together if you will."

"Surrounded by hundreds of people," Toph pointed out.

"Only because this is a social event," Poppy retaliated just as quickly that Toph was almost impressed. "Please, Toph dear, it would mean the world to us for you to come, a lot of people would want to meet you as well, I'm sure you wouldn't want to let them down."

Actually, she wanted to. Toph didn't want any of the pompous children coming up to her and asking her whether or not it was comfortable camping outside without the beds, or even ask if she felt safe sleeping without a roof to protect her. Sure, the adults would most likely ask the slightly more mature questions. But, at least they would at least have the decency to hold back their tongue on asking those childish ones, since to them, the concept of sleeping outside was quite foreign.

But Poppy was already giving her those sweet looks that Toph usually gave her friends once in a while to throw them off. It worked for Toph, since she always got what she wanted.

And to think that her own prim and proper mother was using it on her was ironic.

Sighing softly, Toph nodded, picking up her chopsticks again. "Fine," she relented sullenly, and her parents instantly perked up at that. "I'll go, but only because you told me the nobles would want to ask questions, nothing else. I won't promise you if I actually formed a bond between any of them."

Poppy clapped once, smiling again. "Excellent! Now, you don't can't go back to your academy just yet, we would want you to stay here so that we could get ready."

Toph resisted the urge to shudder at the thought of being handled so that she could get dressed, before she realised at what her mother said. "Wait, I _can't_ go back? But what about my students? I need to know how they're doing."

Lao hummed. "Send a messenger hawk to them and say you have an important event to go to," he looked at her evenly, as if daring her to argue. "I'm sure you already have excelled students who had mastered the art of metalbending to look after the new ones for you."

Toph almost scowled at him, knowing how he was referring to the time when Penga, Ho Tun, and Moo-Chee lifted the collapsed mine back at Yu Dao last year, during the time her father made an agreement with Loban to start the Earthen Fire Refinery to create peace among earthbenders and firebenders alike.

"I have," she lamented, knowing defeat when she saw it and started picking at her food. She sighed, louder this time. "I'll send them a message later."

Lao smiled. "Wonderful."

* * *

><p>And so there she was in a dress being escorted by the Dai Li as her parents walked on either side of her. Toph could feel the Royal Palace looming above her as they started for the door, well avoiding the long line that she and Katara used to having trouble getting in years ago.<p>

At the thought of the waterbender girl, she sighed, missing her friends for a while since the last time she saw them was after they

dropped her off at her metalbending academy, and even then she had a hard time letting them go as Appa flew off with them.

She immediately schooled her expression into a neutral one as the smell of expensive perfume blasted in her face, almost making her gag as she felt the way the floor was as crowded as the last time she was there for Bosco's party. The Beifong family didn't even get to take another step forward when someone called out to them.

"Lao Beifong!"

It was obvious a number of people near them realised who they were and nodded respectfully, but then a man walked heavily across the floor as he went and greeted them.

Toph was already getting bored as the two men talked, her mother's own light lit joined in once a while as Toph merely stood there with her back straight, letting her seismic powers spread over the palace as she felt many Dai Li officers hidden between the crowds of nobles from the Earth Kingdom, Fire Nation, and Watertribe. She was extra wary with them now, ever since they ambushed her and her friends when they wanted to speak with the Earth King a while back.

"This is my daughter, Toph."

At the sound of her name, she gave the nobleman a polite smile with a bow, and she wanted to scoff when she felt the noble's surprise.

He caught himself before he bowed as well. "It is an honour to finally meet you, Lady Beifong. I have heard such incredible stories you have done with the Avatar and your friends, and the other accomplishments that made me very interested. Would you care explaining to me, how is it that you became to create metalbending?"

Toph wanted to grin widely as much as she wanted to crack her knuckles. Oh, that was an interesting story she would want to explain, and she could feel Lao and Poppy stiffened beside her, grimacing slightly as they had heard the tale from both Master Yu and Xin Fu after they gave up trying to find her.

Toph was starting to feel some interest in this.

More people began to circle around her as she continued to talk. When she was finished and had received compliments that she wallowed on it, the circle departed. But then, someone else would take their place and asked her some questions that they latched onto the conversation for a while before she excused herself, making her way towards the refreshments for a drink.

Sighing, she felt the cool water run down her throat as she drank. "Who knew talking would be exhausting?" She muttered, swirling the water slightly in the glass. And almost begrudgingly, she grunted. "And they're not so bad, I suppose."

She was so lost in her thoughts that she didn't realise someone was walking towards her until the last minute, and she immediately stiffened in defence.

"Excuse me, Lady Beifong, but I would like to have a word with

you."

She let grin split across her face at the voice as she relaxed, and turned around gracefully with a show of whirling her skirts as she faced the intruder. "And what presence deserves my attention?"

He chuckled, bowing slightly at her. "The Fire Lord apparently."

She smirked, bowing back. "Well, hello to you Fire Lord Zuko, it's been a while since I last saw you throwing tantrums, and I'm blind."

Zuko scoffed. "Please, I have more class than that," he smiled. "I do it secretly."

She snorted softly. "I could have hit you, but then some people here would have died of the obscenity I showed and none of us would be happy."

He laughed lightly. "People are watching now."

"Yeah, well, that's because we're outstanding as it is." She grinned. "But, it's been a while, Sifu Hotman, how's being a Fire Lord coming up for you?"

He let out a grunt as he took a glass, the servant near them poured him some water before scampering away. "Tedious," he replied sourly. "I mean, it's good and all, and I don't want to complain-"

"You just did."

She sipped her drink delicately when she felt the way he gave her a pointed look. "Anyway, the people are demanding, I'm trying everything I can to clean up the hundred year mess all around the world while looking through the demands my people need. The papers on my desk would have mounted to the ceiling if I didn't go through them daily."

"Aww, poor baby," she gave a pout, to which he let out a huff of breath that she snickered. "Cheer up, Hotman, you'll get them done and going, like you always do nowadays."

He let out a grunt. "Will you stop calling me that?" He grumbled sourly. "You're starting to sound like Aang."

She raised her hand in a wave. "Hotman." She greeted in a cheery voice.

He rolled his eyes at her impression of their friend. "What about you, Toph? I heard from Katara that your school had earthbenders coming to learn from you that it was almost overflowing."

"It's alright I suppose, and I have a few of my successful students that helped me train the new ones," she shrugged. "All's going well, and I get to boss them around, so we're all happy," she paused. "How is Sugarqueen, though? I haven't seen her or the other two dunderheads in over a year."

"They're fine," he answered idly. "I just saw them just now actually."

She blinked. "They're here?"

He smirked, taking a sip of juice. "Yes, Toph. Our friends are here."

She raised her eyebrows. "I didn't expect them to come, honestly."

"They are war heroes like us now, not peasants like they used to be."

"They are still peasants," Toph pointed out with a grin, enjoying the way both of them were making fun of their friends. "But, peasants with a title."

Zuko shook his head with a click of his tongue, obviously amused. "Incredible."

"Bad mouthing us, oh Lords and Ladies?"

She rolled her eyes. "Just stating the truth for what it is."

Aang chuckled as Sokka and Katara stood on each side of him. The three friends bowed towards them before Aang shifted his voice into a lower range. "Fire Lord Zuko, Lady Beifong."

Toph answered with one of her own as Zuko followed suit. "Avatar Aang," Zuko answered, a smile present. "Master Sokka and Master Katara."

"Classy." Sokka commented, straightening himself up with a grin.

"It's good to see you again, Toph." Katara smiled.

"Likewise, Sugarqueen," Toph responded easily. "Even if I can't exactly see, per say."

All of them shared a chuckle, and Toph felt something lifted in her chest as all of her friends now stood around her. If she concentrated more, she could probably feel her friends' own burdens being pushed away, leaving them all standing there in their little bubble of friendship like they used to when they were still looking for answers.

She sensed someone coming towards them and she straightened. "Get ready for boring nobles," she muttered. "We just made the mistake of standing at one place that we're attracting more flies, one of us is going to be snatched away from the guy who's coming towards us behind Sifu Hotman here."

All of them swallowed the laughter that managed to bubble up, the disgruntled Fire Lord only shot her a glare before they turned around to face the men walking leisurely towards them. The smiles on the noblesmen's faces faltered slightly when all five of the greatest heroes in history faced their way, and Toph was almost smug when she felt the stutter in their steps, before they quickly composed themselves and continued on their way.

"Avatar Aang," one of them greeted them before both of them bowed towards them all, to which they answered with their own. "We would like to talk to you if you will? A discussion of sorts with my friend here and other people who are interested?"

Aang nodded, giving them a reassuring smile. "Of course." When the two men turned their backs onto them, Aang's smile slowly turned into a wince, to which Toph clicked her tongue in mock displeasure. "Gotta guys, I'll see you later."

"Good luck," Sokka snickered as Aang trailed behind the two of them, disappearing among the group of people.

And at that moment, the music started.

Zuko turned towards Katara with a smile, offering his arm. "If Master Katara would be so kind to join me in dancing? It's been a while since we had a proper conversation that I was actually starting to miss your ranting."

Katara chuckled as she took his offer. "Why, how could I ever refuse the Fire Lord? It's not everyday he would dance with a peasant."

He raised an eyebrow at her. "You heard that?"

She scoffed, squeezing his arm. "Of course I did, Sifu Hotman. Let's go."

He shook his head in mock distress as he began to steer her away, sighing heavily through his nose that both Toph and Sokka grinned widely. "Come on then."

And that left Toph and Sokka alone.

See, this was another one of her mistakes, she should have just left him with a governor who would have the same interest as the young Watertribe warrior instead of taking the time to finish her drink. And she was too late when she felt Sokka facing her then. "Would Lady Beifong spare another peasant a dance as well?" He asked with a small bow at her way. "I would be very honoured to be in your presence."

She smirked. "I didn't know you can do formality, Snoozles."

"Hey, I've been very formal for the past few months," he protested as he straightened himself from his position. "Do you know how many meetings I had to go to? All stiff and proper and rules."

"Welcome to the life of high society," she commented idly, making Sokka laugh.

"So, do I get my answer?"

"For what?"

"To dance with you, of course."

"I'm blind, remember?"

"Oh please," he snorted. "That card is getting old, and I've _seen_

you dance before remember?"

He did? "When?"

"At a charity event, a very classy one."

Oh, she remembered that now. It was two years ago and her feet hurt after that. "Oh, yeah."

She felt the air being disturbed as he offered his arm towards her. "Shall we?"

She sighed ruefully, weaving her fingers just at the crooked part of his elbow before he led her towards the dance floor. "I suppose," she hummed in faux thought. "I wouldn't want your reputation to be stepped into the mud just because I denied your request."

"Or you just like my company," he gloated, gently stopping her from moving any further as he set his hand on her waist before clasping their hands together, making her heart jump to her throat when he started to guide them through the floor. "You look beautiful, by the way."

She tried swallowing down the blush, and only gave him a half smile. "I wish I could return the compliment, but I don't even know what you look like."

He laughed, twirling her around. "Pity," he teased. "You would've see this handsome face then."

She rolled her eyes. "Don't flatter yourself."

She didn't need to see to know how attractive he was. From where her hand rested on his shoulder, it was obvious he wasn't the scrawny fifteen year old boy he was during their journey on Appa, where he filled up nicely with the muscles he developed over the years. He also adopted a sense of grace in walking ever since he had been learning to sword fight with Master Piandao years ago that she could feel his long strides on the earth as he walked. The meteorite she wore as a bracelet was currently wrapped around her arm under her dress, and for some reason it suddenly felt heavy whenever Sokka was in her presence.

This was another mistake she did.

Noticing his little changes that it became enduring when she specifically ordered herself to not check Sokka out whenever he was near, because he was her best friend and best friends didn't usually check each other out.

Usually.

"I thought I would be alone in this torture," she mumbled, lowering down her hand from his shoulder so that it rested on his chest instead. "But now that you guys are here, I feel kind of better."

"See?" she tried to breathe evenly when he leaned forward to let his mouth hover above her ear. "You do enjoy my company."

She leaned back to give them -or rather herself- some space so that she could just breathe, and she felt the way his cheek brushed against hers slightly when she did. "Flattery is really unbecoming of you, Master Sokka," she began lowly. "Perhaps you should dunk your head into the fountain to clear yourself of these tactless thoughts."

He laughed, squeezing her hand briefly. "Very funny, Toph."

She shot him a smirk, before shrugging lightly. "What can I say? I'm a natural comedian," she paused. "How's rebuilding the South Pole coming for you?"

He perked up at that, she could feel it in the way he moved lightly across the floor when he turned them around. "Really good actually, we had some waterbenders from the North Pole to help us out, and so far, everything's going as smoothly as they can. More food was given to us, shelters are build more, we even have our own wolves to move on sleighs now, so our work had been remarkably easier when they were used to carry some stuff."

She nodded. "That's good to hear. Are you some sort of adviser to your dad?"

"Maybe?" He shrugged. "I have been giving him some ideas to be used in our tribe, make it more or less like the Northern Watertribe but with our own personal touches, you know? It'll be great," he explained enthusiastically. "I feel like my home is going to be more secure this time, at least I won't be the only one looking after it now."

Sometimes, she forgot that Sokka and Katara only came from a small home, they're lives weren't as lucky as hers that she couldn't help but be feel some sort of pity for them, ever since their home was destroyed years ago by the fire nation.

But that was in the past, and they were all looking forward into the future.

Toph gave him a squeeze of his hand. "That's really great, Sokka. I'm glad that it's going well."

They slowed to the end of the song, and he was still holding her to him when he answered, and she could the way his chest vibrated when he let out a chuckle, tucking a stray of long hair that managed to escape from her half bun. "Thanks, Toph."

She let go of his hand and took a step back, straightening her posture as she only managed to give him a small smile. "Don't mention it."

"How long will you be staying here?" He asked as they went over to where their friends were talking at the edge of the room. "I was hoping all of us would catch up more tomorrow morning."

"I'll be going back the first thing tomorrow," she informed him as she weaved through bodies. "I don't think I'll be able to spare you guys some time."

He hummed, and she knew then he was thinking of a plan. "Well, you

could go back with us, you know."

She smirked. "That's sweet and all, Sokka, but my lily livers are already abandoned for a little over two weeks, and every time I leave them longer than that, they'll start getting sloppy because I wasn't there to set them straight."

"Ah, the great Sifu Toph and her demonising ways of getting her students to work," he sniffed while wiping away an imaginary tear. "We commoners fear you."

"As you should be," she agreed with a nod of her head. "But who knows, once there's a holiday or something, I'll drop by the Jasmine Dragon sometime and I'll meet all of you there."

He grinned once they stood near their friends. "Sounds great."

"What is?" Aang asked curiously as he peered at them both.

Sokka shrugged. "Toph was telling me she couldn't catch up with us now, but maybe someday at the Jasmine Dragon."

"What, why?" Katara asked as she faced the blind teenager, a small frown marring her expression.

Toph shrugged. "My students, they need me."

"Well, we need you too," Katara sighed. "We haven't seen you for a while and well, we miss you."

Toph smirked. "Don't get teary on me now, Sweetness, it's only been a year."

Katara huffed, crossing her arms. "Well, I'm _sorry_ I miss my friend."

Toph patted her arm. "Yeah, I know."

"Uncle wouldn't mind seeing us again," Zuko informed them. "He's been sending me hawks and telling me to come by and visit, but I haven't had the time to do it."

Aang hummed, rubbing his chin in thought. "I still have some work to do too. How about this, when one of us has the time to go, we'll just send hawks to each other and then we'll meet at Iroh's shop." He grinned. "Is that okay?"

All of them nodded. "Sounds good," Sokka grinned.

"Excuse me, Lady Beifong?"

She could feel her friends' sympathy as she sighed mentally, turning around to give the old lady a smile. "Lady Koo, how are you?"

* * *

><p>It was hours later when Toph had bid farewell towards her friends as she hugged them all, feeling the way Sokka turned his head slightly to graze his lips against her cheek that it cost all her willpower to not flush under the contact when they leaned back,

before following her parents to ride on the carriage and waved her farewell towards her friends.<p>

"So," Poppy began as she fiddled with her hair while Toph started to settle on the seat, where they were on their way to the house at the Upper Ring for the night before they get back home the next morning. "How was it? Did you meet new people?"

Toph nodded. "I did."

"That's good," Lao commented from her mother's side. "And how do you think of them?"

She shrugged. "They're alright."

"Did you meet their children? I heard they were very excited to meet you."

Ah, yes. The pretty boys who came to talk to her with plastering grins and putting up their most charming personality that she actually felt sick of the lies, turning them all down for a dance when they asked. "They did," Toph replied warily, somehow feeling there's more to this.

"How do you like them? I saw a handsome young man that asked you to dance, a son of the Ong family, but it was a pity you denied him," Poppy sighed, folding her hands on her lap. "He looked very nice too."

Toph grunted. "I was tired from standing too long, Mother, a lot of people wanted to talk to me before that. So, I denied dances when I could."

That wasn't entirely a lie.

"Oh, well," Poppy seemed downcast for a while before she straightened up, giving her daughter a smile. "Maybe next year then."

Toph blinked. "Why do you want me to get to know these men so suddenly?"

"You see, dear," Lao started, taking Poppy's hand in his. "You're sixteen now, and it's obvious you're independent on your own that both your mother and I were wrong about you in the first place when we hid you from sight."

"Only because we thought what was best for you." Poppy added quickly.

He nodded. "Yes, of course. And we thought of asking you to go to these galas and charity events to meet new people and get to know them properly so that you wouldn't have a problem in the future."

"What your father is trying to say is," Poppy glanced at Lao, to which he nodded encouragingly at her. "We wouldn't want you to push away these young men too frequently and just let them treat you some gifts. Who knows, you would probably get to know him better."

Then, it all clicked at once.

Everything, from the moment her parents asked her to go to this gala, to this moment when she was literally being pried.

"Are you asking me to get _married_?"

Toph couldn't mask her disbelief as her parents shook their heads, laughing gently at her expression. "Not now, of course," Poppy waved away her concern, and Toph's fears came true when Lao nodded as well. "You're still young, maybe at the age of eighteen? There are very nice men who would want to get to know you properly, they were smitten by you the moment you walked in those doors."

Somehow, that didn't reassure her.

"Mother," Toph began slowly, as if she was the adult here. "I can't get married."

"I know that, that's why I told you that the age of eighteen is better."

"No," Toph tried again. "I can't get married, _ever_."

There was a long pause as the two parents stared at their only daughter in shock, before Lao began to speak. "Why not, Toph?"

Toph bit her lower lip before turning away briefly, feeling the way the gentle wind blew on her face from the window. "Ask me again when I turn eighteen," she said instead. "I can't answer for myself for now."

The silence that dwelled between them began to weigh with pressure, and the moment they stopped in front of the house they were staying for a short amount of time, Toph walked quickly towards her room while lifting her skirts above her ankles, before slamming the door closed.

End
file.